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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: FEBRUARY 05, 2010

Summary: Coverage of India's offer to resume dialogue with Pakistan dominated front pages on Friday morning. Reaction to the conviction of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui garnered extensive coverage. Newspapers reported protests across Pakistan labeling the verdict and America as anti-Muslim. Papers carried official statements by President Zardari and the Foreign Office Spokesman expressing concern and dismay over the verdict. Media reported Siddiqui's family's demand that Pakistan stop supplies to NATO troops in Afghanistan until she is released. Some dailies highlighted the Afghan Taliban's threat to execute a captive American soldier if Siddiqui is not released. Newspapers reported the arrest of 30 suspects in connection with the Lower Dir bombing. Several dailies carried Special Representative Holbrooke's comments clarifying that the three American soldiers killed in the incident were U.S. military trainers and not contractors working for Xe Services, the firm formerly known as Blackwater. The English daily, "Dawn," also reported Holbrooke's statement that reconciling conflicting regional security interests is a major dilemma for the U.S. in Afghanistan. Media also highlighted General McChrystal's remarks urging NATO allies to send thousands of trainers to help strengthen Afghan security forces and exploit a window of opportunity to defeat the Taliban and Al Qaeda. Two Urdu language newspapers published the U.S. Mission's press release rejecting as "entirely false" media reports that NATO aircraft violated Pakistani airspace in Zhob (Baluchistan). Media coverage of the military offensive in Bajaur Agency continued, with reports of 15 militants, including four foreigners, killed. End Summary.

TOP STORIES

News Story: Pakistan Seeks Details Of Agenda: India Changes Tune; Offers High-Level Talks - "Dawn" (02/05)

"The Foreign Office said on Thursday it had sought clarification from New Delhi of its proposal for talks at the level of Foreign Secretaries. A senior Foreign Ministry official told 'Dawn' that India has proposed a meeting between Foreign Secretaries of the two countries, but has suggested no agenda. Diplomatic observers here are of the opinion that India would like the talks to focus on terrorism as against Pakistan's desire of resumption of full-scale Composite Dialogue which was suspended after the 26/11 Mumbai attacks."

News Story: U.S. Welcomes Indian Offer Of Talks With Pak - "The Nation" (02/05)

"The Obama Administration on Friday welcomed the Indian proposal to hold talks with Pakistan at the level of Foreign Secretary. 'This is a welcome move,' the Assistant Secretary of State for Public

Affairs, P.J. Crowley, told reporters at the Foggy Bottom headquarters of the State Department."

News Story: Pakistan Expresses Dismay Over Unexpected Verdict Of American Jury In Dr. Aafia Siddiqui's Case - "The News" (02/25)

"Pakistan Thursday expressed dismay over unexpected verdict of the American jury in Dr. Aafia Siddiqui's case. Reacting to the judgment in this case, Foreign Office Spokesman Abdul Basit said the Government will consult family of Dr. Aafia and the team of defence lawyers to determine future course of action."

News Story: Anger, Protest Over Conviction Of Dr. Aafia - "Dawn" (02/05)

"Political and lawyer leaders reacted angrily over the conviction in a U.S. court of neuroscientist Dr. Aafia Siddiqui branding the decision American's bias against the Muslims. Dr. Siddiqui was convicted for the attempted killing of U.S. agents while in detention in Afghanistan in 2008."

News Story: Zardari Orders Govt. To Provide Legal Aid To Aafia - "Dawn" (02/05)

"As demonstrations were held in various cities and towns of the country on Thursday in protest against an American jury verdict against Pakistani Neuro-Scientist Dr Aafia Siddiqui, President Asif Ali Zardari ordered the government to provide all possible legal assistance to Dr. Aafia."

News Story: Aafia's Family Wants NATO Supplies Shut - "The Nation" (02/05)

"The family of Dr Aafia Siddiqui believes that she will be released within three days if Pakistan closes down supplies to the NATO troops fighting in the war-ravaged country.... Dr Fauzia Siddiqui, an elder sister of Dr. Aafia, said while addressing a Press conference at her residence along with Senator Talha Mahmood, the Chairman of the Senate's Standing Committee on Interior Affairs here on Thursday."

News Story: Taliban To Execute U.S. Soldier If Aafia Not Released - "The News" (02/05)

"The Afghan Taliban on Thursday demanded the release of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui, a Pakistani scientist who has been convicted by the U.S. court on charges of her alleged attempt to murder U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan, and threatened to execute an American soldier they were holding currently. They claimed Aafia Siddiqui's family had approached the Taliban network through a Jirga of notables, seeking their assistance to put pressure on the U.S. to provide her justice."

News Story: 30 Arrested After Attack On U.S. Forces - "The Nation" (02/05)

"Police have arrested 30 suspects in connection with a bombing that killed three American soldiers, three children and a Pakistani paramilitary soldier outside a girls' school, an officer said."

News Story: Soldiers, Not Blackwater Personnel Killed In Dir: U.S. - "Dawn" (02/05)

"The three Americans killed by an improvised explosive device in Dir were U.S. military trainers and not contractors working for Xe Services, the firm formerly known as Blackwater, says Richard Holbrooke. The U.S. special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan told reporters that two more American military personnel were injured in the roadside blast on Wednesday and were evacuated to Islamabad. All five were part of a convoy on the way to the inauguration of a girls' school in the area, Mr. Holbrooke said."

News Story: Soldiers' Deaths Draw Focus To U.S. In Pakistan - "The Post" (02/05)

"The deaths of three American soldiers in a Taliban suicide attack on Wednesday lifted the veil on United States military assistance to Pakistan that the authorities here would like to keep quiet and the

Americans, as the donors, chafe at not receiving credit for, reports New York Times."

News Story: India-Pakistan Conflict A Dilemma For U.S. - "Dawn" (02/05)

"A major dilemma for the United States in Afghanistan is to reconcile the conflicting security interests of countries like India and Pakistan, says a senior U.S. official. "The Indians have a legitimate series of security interests in that region, as do a number of other countries including, of course, Pakistan, China, and all the other countries that neighbor on Afghanistan," said Richard Holbrooke, U.S. Special Representative for the Pak-Afghan region, when asked to comment on the traditional jostling between Pakistan and India for greater influence in Afghanistan."

News Story: U.S. Urges Allies To Send Trainers To Afghanistan - "Dawn" (02/05)

"The United States on Thursday urged NATO allies to send thousands of trainers to help strengthen Afghan security forces and exploit a window of opportunity to defeat the Taliban and Al Qaeda. The request came as the top commander in Afghanistan, U.S. General Stanley McChrystal, said that security was not deteriorating but that the corner had not yet been turned."

News Story: No NATO Aircraft Violated Pakistan's Airspace: U.S. - "Ausaf," "Al-Akhbar" (02/05)

"U.S. Embassy has contradicted media reports that NATO aircraft violated Pakistan's airspace in the Zhob district on Wednesday. This accusation is entirely false. No NATO aircraft flew over the Zhob district as alleged in the article. Coalition and U.S. air operations in Afghanistan conducted along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region are closely coordinated with Pakistan's Air Force."

News Story: NATO Denies, But Jets Continue To Violate Pak Airspace - "The News" (02/05)

"Pakistan has ordered security forces deployed on its western border to remain alert following airspace violation by the NATO aircraft on Thursday. Sources said at least two jet fighters of the NATO violated the Pakistan airspace twice and entered into the territory at Qamardin, a village situation near Zhob district of Balochistan province." (Story not available online)

News Story: Foreigners Among 15 Killed - "Dawn" (02/05)

"Fifteen militants, four of them foreigners, were killed and 10 injured when security forces backed by jets and helicopter gunships attacked militants' positions in Bajaur on Thursday."

TERRORISM/MILITARY ISSUES

News Story: Bomber May Have Hit U.S. Vehicle With Help: Official - "Dawn" (02/05)

"Suspicion intensified Thursday that a suicide car bomber who killed three U.S. soldiers training Pakistani troops along the Afghan border had inside information on their movements. If confirmed that Wednesday's suicide attack was aimed at the Americans, it would indicate an increased sophistication in militant tactics, as well as potential infiltration of extremists in Pakistani security forces. The attack on U.S. forces occurred in Lower Dir, a northwest district believed to be a crossroads for al-Qaida and the Taliban."

News Story: Pakistan Faces Backlash After Attack On U.S. Troops - "Dawn" (02/05)

"The Taliban bombing that killed three U.S. special forces soldiers in Pakistan on Wednesday could further weaken the government and hurt U.S. efforts to win more backing in the fight against militants. 'It will only convince the public, even moderate Pakistanis who are anti-Taliban, that the government is doing nothing expect lying to them, and the military for that matter,' said Ahmed Rashid, a Pakistani analyst and expert on militants. 'It will be a big blow for public morale.'"

News Story: NATO Commander Calls On Kayani - "Daily Times" (02/05)

"Commander of NATO training mission in Afghanistan Lt. General William B. Caldwell on Thursday called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani on Thursday at General Headquarters. The visiting dignitary remained with the COAS for some time and discussed matters of professional interest."

News Story: U.S. Confirms Hakimullah's Death - "Dawn" (02/05)

"U.S. counter-terrorism officials are now confirming that Pakistani Taliban leader Hakimullah Mehsud is dead, the U.S. media reported on Thursday. Both CNN and Fox News quoted senior U.S. intelligence officials as saying that Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan chief was killed in a drone attack last month."

POLITICAL ISSUES

News Story: Troika Discusses Security, Indian Offer - "Dawn" (02/05)

"President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani and Chief of the Army Staff General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani held an important meeting on Thursday evening and discussed issues relating to national security and the ongoing drive against extremism and militancy. The meeting gained added significance as it took place in the backdrop of the latest Indian offer of foreign secretary-level talks to resume the stalled composite dialogue with Pakistan."

News Story: Pakistan Would Welcome Dialogue With India: FM - "The News" (02/05)

"Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi Thursday said India is signaling that it is ready to hold bilateral talks, a move Pakistan would welcome if the talks lead to the resumption of full dialogue, which India suspended in late 2008, a private news channel reported."

ECONOMY/ENVIRONMENT

News Story: Pakistan Unlikely To Seek New IMF Funding - "Dawn" (02/05)

"Pakistan is unlikely to enter another lending program with the International Monetary Fund, but a final decision will be taken towards the end of the year, Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin said on Thursday."

MISCELLANEOUS

News Story: Iran Tells Gulf U.S. Missiles Could Be Made Useless - "Dawn" (02/05)

"A senior Iranian military official told Gulf states on Thursday not to squander money on U.S. missiles, saying that Iran could render them useless, the state news agency Irna reported. Tehran on Wednesday slammed plans by the United States to beef up defence in the Gulf against potential Iranian missile attacks, with the Islamic republic insisting it posed no threat to its neighbors."

EDITORIALS/OPINIONS

Editorial: Lower Dir Attack, an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (02/05)

"The Taliban would doubtless be euphoric over Wednesday's attack that killed three American servicemen who were reportedly on a training mission with the Frontier Corps.... What the Americans were doing there and the tragedy that followed are a typical example of the lack of a clear demarcation of lines that often characterizes coordination between Pakistani and American agencies at tactical levels.... It goes without saying that the Taliban wouldn't miss any opportunity to make themselves felt and strike even if this leads to heavy civilian casualties. What is important, however, is to realize that the Taliban suicide bomber could not have struck without a tip-off from insiders. The 'probe' that invariably follows such

tragedies should consider this aspect of the security situation and flush out those among the Pakistani establishment who serve as the Taliban's eyes and ears."

Editorial: Open And Brutal War, an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (02/05)

"In a bomb attack on a military convoy in Lower Dir, three American soldiers and four female students lost their lives.... It seems as if the TTP tried to kill two birds with one stone: killing American soldiers who were training Pakistani forces to fight the Taliban and al Qaeda and blowing up a girls' school as they have been doing in the past. It is horrendous that the Taliban once again did not shrink from attacking young female children. It proves once more that these fanatics have no mercy for anyone, women, children or the old. Those elements that have been advocating holding a dialogue with the Taliban need to open their eyes and see the true face of these monsters.... The only solution to the problem lies in pursuing the militants with full zeal. There should not be any let up in the operations against them. We have to see this struggle through to the bitter end."

Editorial: Killing Of U.S. Soldiers In Dir Ignite Rumors, an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (02/05)

"Thursday's incident in Dir has confirmed that American troops are very much present in Pakistan and engaged in questionable activities.... In fact, reports have been appearing in media that American troops, intelligence personnel and agents of entities like Blackwater are found everywhere in the country, roaming freely and engaged in mysterious activities. There are apprehensions that their activities go beyond the scope of the war on terror, as they seem to be more interested in gathering sensitive information. The Dir incident requires explanation both from the Government of Pakistan and the United States, as it shows that there are some hidden aspects of the mutual cooperation as well, which come to surface on such occasions."

Editorial: Lower Dir Bomb Blast: Something Needs To Be Clarified, an editorial in the leading mass circulation populist, often sensational Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (02/05)

"The Lower Dir suicide bombing is a clear manifestation that the militants are still hiding in the Malakand division, which has been cleared by the army after operation, and their communication system is intact. This attack has also disclosed, for the first time, the presence of American military personnel in the far-flung areas of the country. We think that the government must tell the real facts behind this issue."

Editorial: Lower Dir Suicide Attack: Another Futile Act, an editorial in the Peshawar-based Urdu-language daily "Mashriq" (cir. 55,000) (02/05)

"The Lower Dir suicide bombing was different from other terrorist attacks, which played havoc in various parts of the country, in a sense that the U.S. soldiers were its real target. Though, these instructors had been assigned the duty to impart training to the FC personnel, but their participation in a civil ceremony has raised many questions about the real motives behind their arrival in Pakistan. In fact, the Pakistani public has serious reservations on the deployment of U.S. military personnel in the country and the killing of these American soldiers has reinforced the propaganda of certain elements who allege that Washington is interfering in our internal affairs."

Editorial: The World Must Listen To General Kayani, an editorial in the country's premier business newspaper, "Business Recorder" (cir. 25,000) (02/05)

"By sidelining Pakistan, the international community would be betraying a friend of peace and stability in the region and adding to the miseries of the Afghan people. What our political leadership and diplomats may not have said in such stark words, the army chief has, and we hope the world would listen to him. As to the London conference decision to 'buy over' a few thousands Afghans that must appeal to those to see Afghans as saleable commodity but, as General

Kayani said, the Afghans 'sit on crossroads to see who is winning and who is losing'. Though the general is normally a man of a few words, what he says, he means, and that the world should understand."

Editorial: Dr. Aafia And The U.S. Justice System, an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (02/05)

"In an uncereemonious end to one of the most controversial cases to hit the U.S.-led, Pakistan-supported 'war on terror', Dr. Aafia Siddiqui has been found guilty by a U.S. court of attempting to murder American soldiers whilst being detained for questioning in Afghanistan in 2008.... Dr. Aafia's verdict was too predictable. The decision reeks of pre-judgment. If she is guilty, justice should run its course and be seen to be so doing, and if she is innocent, the entire Pakistani nation would like to have this long suffering citizen back home. Cases such as this are undermining the American constitution and justice system when too many questions remain unanswered and too many people remain unconvinced of the United States' intentions towards its perceived or real enemies within the Muslim community."

Editorial: Judged Guilty, an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (02/05)

"The trail from an ordinary middle-class household to top universities in the U.S. and then to prison in New York needs to be followed. It could offer an insight into the working of extremism. There is reason to believe that even now, groups are active in attempting to win over the minds of the best and brightest in the country. They must be prevented from doing so. This is possible only by rising above the hysteria that has been constantly present in the case of Dr. Aafia and by logically, and truthfully, investigating the many facets that lie behind her tragic story."

Editorial: Aafia: Victim of 9/11, an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (02/05)

"When the statistics are added up, it will be found that Pakistanis have been the worst victims of 9/11 and the U.S. military crusade targeting many Muslim states and people in the wake of that September act of terror.... So it should not have surprised anyone to find Dr Aafia in the dock in a courtroom in New York City, where the trauma of 9/11 was probably most palpable, after having been battered, bruised and abused for an indefinite period in Bagram airbase, Afghanistan. For anyone who thought she would actually get justice, the jury decision on Wednesday should have cleared that little misconception about the US and its jury-based judicial system.... Today Dr Aafia is not just one Pakistani victim of 9/11; through her, the whole nation stands abused and victimized for a crime they did not commit. As for the state, it has died for all but the ruling elite of Pakistan."

Editorial: Injustice Delivered To Dr. Aafia In The Name Of Justice, an editorial in the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" (cir. 10,000) (02/05)

"In a statement after the conviction of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui by the U.S. Federal Court, her sister has appealed to the Pakistani nation to remain calm. It seems that she gave this statement in a state of utter delusion because neither the demonstration of peace nor any protest by the Pakistani people can force the U.S. government to treat Pakistan as a sovereign country. To speak the truth, our rulers can even sell the sons and daughters of the soil for dollars."

Editorial: Conviction Of Dr. Aafia By U.S. 'Jirga System', an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (02/05)

"The conviction of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui has exposed the true face of the American judicial system to the whole world. The verdict of the so-called 'Jury of U.S. Citizens' has surpassed the most inhuman punishments awarded by tribal Jirga systems throughout the world. We think that this decision would result in more hatred against America in the Muslim world."

Editorial: Dr. Aafia Convicted, an editorial in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (02/05)

"In order to convict foreigners the American society portrays them as terrorists. There is an American adage that 'first pronounce someone as a mad person and then kill him.' The entire Muslim community should protest over the American bias against Dr. Aafia."

Editorial: American Court's Decision Against Dr. Aafia Siddiqui, an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (02/05)

"Dr. Aafia Siddiqui was accused of attempting to murder two American soldiers and one FBI official in Gazni province of Afghanistan. No one was injured in the alleged shootout.... Afghan police arrested Dr. Aafia and accused her of having chemicals canisters and some notes in her possession. However, neither the chemical possession case was framed against her nor was she charged with terrorism. On the second day of her arrest she was charged with attempting to murder Americans.... It is believed that she was abducted from Karachi along with her kids in March 2003 and kept secretly at Bagram Airbase.... Those who arrested or kidnapped her did not bother to think about severity of the crime. It is dramatic to have some prisoner accused of firing shots with a snatched gun, but the allegation cannot hide the crime of kidnapping children. Investigation into the abduction of children is the responsibility of the American administration.... If a British woman journalist would not have exposed the imprisonment (of Aafia) her minor son would have still be in jail."

Editorial: Vulnerable?, an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (02/05)

"Nuclear safety once again exercises the minds of the U.S. Defence Intelligence Agency. Apparently our nuclear assets are 'safe but vulnerable' which would appear to be a contradiction in terms.... The Americans have spent a lot of money in recent years helping us upgrade our nuclear security and there is no reason to believe that they are any more vulnerable than those of India, North Korea or China - or America itself. Militarily, the Taliban have not the slightest chance of ever seizing, let alone detonating if they can assemble all the various parts, any of our nuclear weapons. So what are the vulnerabilities that so trouble Lt-Gen Burgess?"

Editorial: A Rational Approach, an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (02/05)

"Gen. Kayani's incisive analysis of the sticky wicket the country stands on brings to light the dilemma of politicians irrevocably bogged down in a battle for political survival and hardly concerned about such crucial issues. They had better gird up their loins and seriously judge the situation. It is high time the PPP-led dispensation's hobnobbing with the U.S. and its apologetic stance toward the Indians was substituted with a rational approach that can keep Pakistan out of harm's way."

Editorial: Quest For Peace, an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (02/05)

"Briefing the media in Rawalpindi on Wednesday, Gen. Ashfaq Kayani admitted being India-centric as he explained the Pakistan military high command's view of the situation in the region. He reiterated Pakistan's old security concerns of which India and an Indian presence in Afghanistan have always been a part. Gen. Kayani maintained that Pakistan cannot afford to lower its guard and must base its strategy on India's military capability, not its intentions which could change at any point. But that was only one of the messages that came out from the meeting. Reports say the army chief also emphasized the need for a Pak-India dialogue. He said, and he was in sync with the political leadership of the country in making this statement, that Delhi should not allow 'a single terrorist act of a non-state actor' to scuttle the peace initiative."

Opinion: Some Victories But Pitfalls Ahead, an op-ed by Shafqat Mahmood in the populist, often sensational national English daily

"The News" (cir. 55,000) (02/05)

"It is critically vital for Pakistan to interact with the American establishment and make it understand the difficulties inherent in its new Afghan strategy. This has to be done now so that a course correction is possible or at least Pakistan's point of view is clearly understood. Any mismatch between American expectations and our compulsions has the potential to affect our domestic struggle against terrorism. A similar negative impact on our fight against terrorism has become visible because of Indian military's attempt to create a cold-start capability. In simplest terms, it means the ability to attack an adversary without warning. This is done by going on the offensive without mobilization. If India develops such a capability, obviously the Pakistani military has to be ready to face it. Protestation by the Indians that they have no desire to launch such an attack is not enough. As General Kayani says, his responsibility is to prepare for Indian capability, not become comfortable with its good intent."

Opinion: Fumbling Response To A 'Cold' Doctrine, an op-ed by Ayaz Amir in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (02/05)

"For the Cold Start Doctrine is not out of science fiction. It is now the heart of India's war plans against Pakistan.... The idea that if Pakistan is up to any mischief, and if it is to be taught a lesson, the way to deal with it is in the fashion of blitzkrieg: rapid armored thrusts, backed by heavy airpower, to hit at chosen targets in Pakistan and cripple the capacity of its army to retaliate. This presupposes rapid mobilization and the ability to attack before Pakistan has a chance to respond. In other words, catching Pakistan unawares.... We can't match India tank to tank or plane to plane. Such an arms race would be suicidal for us. Nor is it enough to say that our nuke capability is an adequate defence against conventional military attack. It is not. Down this path is Armageddon and even to think along such lines is to enter the realm of despair. If it is only the nuclear option that we can think of then it is a poor reflection on the resources still left to us."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)
Patterson